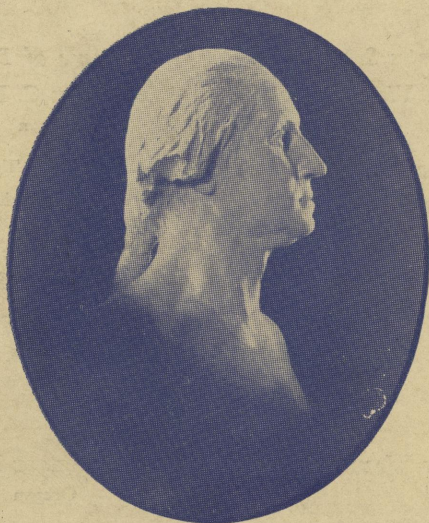


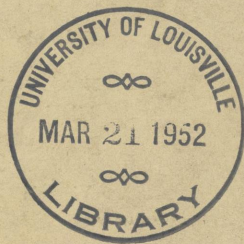
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GEORGE WASHINGTON
AND THE
SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI



By
EDGAR ERSKINE HUME

UNITED STATES GEORGE WASHINGTON
BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C.
1933



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GEORGE WASHINGTON
AND THE
SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

BY

EDGAR ERSKINE HUME

*Assistant Secretary General of the Society of the Cincinnati
and President of the Society in the State of Virginia*



1783

UNITED STATES GEORGE WASHINGTON
BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

Desiring to present every phase of the life and activities of George Washington, the United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission takes pleasure in publishing this pamphlet on George Washington and the Society of the Cincinnati. Washington was the first President General of this famous Order, holding the office until his death, when he was succeeded by Alexander Hamilton.

Major Edgar Erskine Hume, U. S. Army, the author of this pamphlet, is the Assistant Secretary General of the Society, charged with the duty of disseminating information pertaining to the history of the Cincinnati. Moreover, Major Hume is President of the Society in the State of Virginia, George Washington's native State. Because of his position and knowledge of the subject, Major Hume was requested to prepare this article for the Bicentennial Commission.

George Washington and the Society of the Cincinnati, which has been approved by the Honorable John Collins Daves, the present President General of the Society, as well as by the historians of the United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, is being published with the assurance that it will be a valuable addition to the Washingtoniana now in existence.

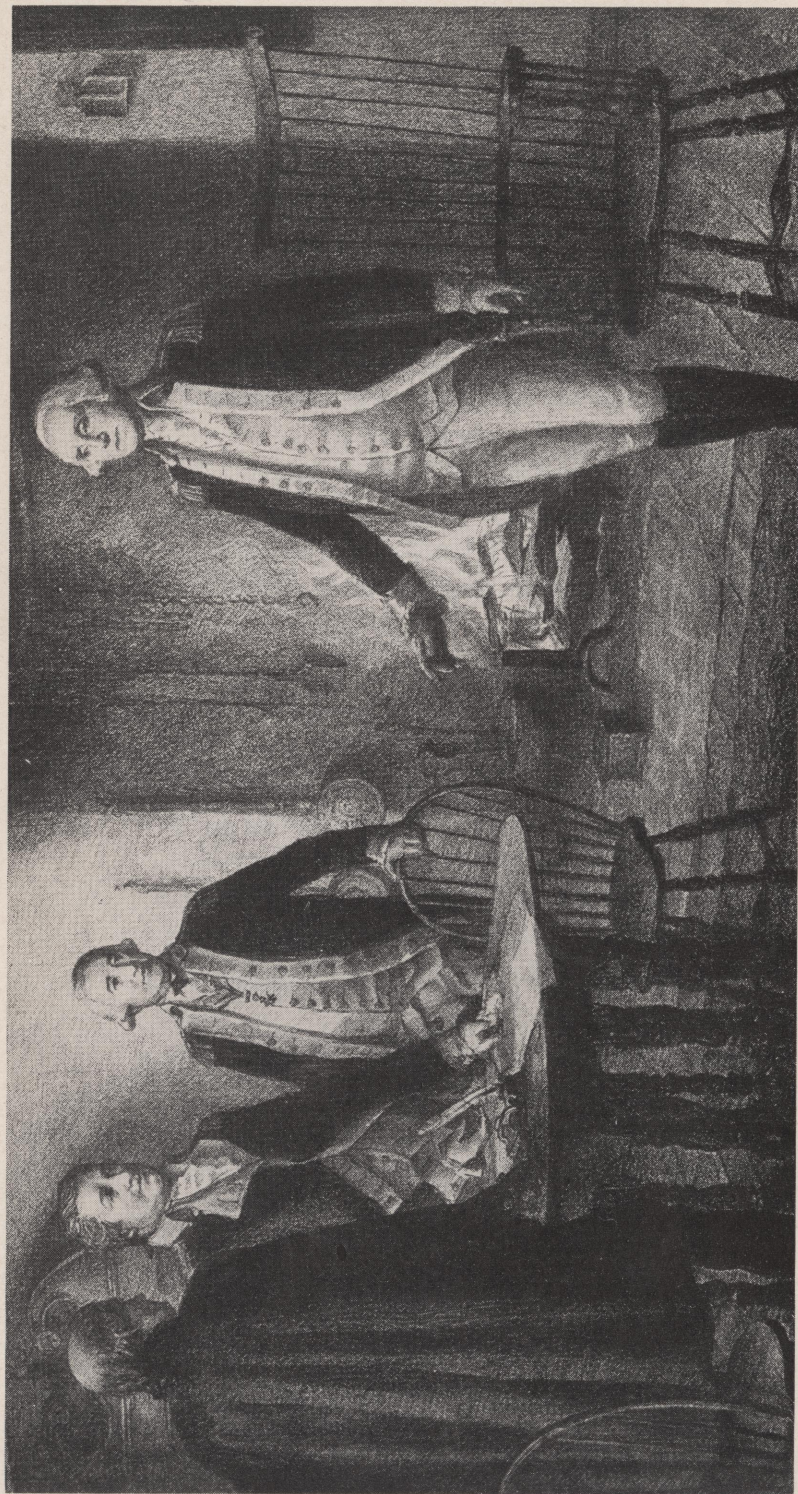
SOL BLOOM,
Director,
*United States George Washington
Bicentennial Commission*

GEORGE WASHINGTON AND THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

FROM the earliest times there has been a tendency among men who have served together in war, to form associations, when such wars were over, for the purpose of continuing the bonds, which, in days of stress, had been cemented with their blood. The greater the hardships suffered in war, the more lasting have been such ties and the more marked the affection in which veterans have held their society.

It appears from an entry in Jefferson's diary (March 16, 1788) that Major General Henry Knox, Washington's Chief of Artillery, in a conversation with Adams as early as 1776, expressed a "wish for some ribbon to wear in his hat or in his button-hole, to be transmitted to his descendants as a badge and proof that he had fought in defence of their liberties. He spoke in such precise terms as showed that he had revolved it in his mind before."

Proposals for the creation of "a society to be formed by the American officers and to be called the Cincinnati," were drawn up in Knox's handwriting and dated "Westpoint, 15 April 1783." These "proposals" having been communicated to the several regiments, they appointed an officer from each, who in conjunction with the general officers, met at the "Cantonment of the American army on Hudson's river," on May 10, 1783, to consider them. This gathering was held in the



General George Washington about to accept membership in the Society of the Cincinnati by signing the roster and becoming its first President General. The event took place on May 20, 1783, at General Washington's Headquarters at Newburgh, New York. The committee to invite General Washington to be President General of the Society consisted of (left to right) Major Generals Heath, Knox and Steuben. The picture is taken from the original engraving by George Laurence Nelson which was executed in 1933 for the Society of the Cincinnati, in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of its institution. No effort was spared by the artist to make the scene historically accurate in every detail. Permission to depict the interior of Washington's headquarters at Newburgh was granted by the trustees of the Newburgh Museum.

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"Temple," the large structure, officially known as the "Public Building," which had been built as a place of worship and other gatherings of the soldiers. On the 13th, the committee which had been appointed to revise the "proposals" met in the Verplanck Mansion, General Steuben's headquarters, at Fishkill and accepted the "Institution," as it was called.

The name of the society was taken from that of the illustrious Roman general, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, who at the call of country left his farm and led the armies of Rome to victory, and when that victory had been achieved, returned again to his plough, refusing the honors proffered him by a grateful Senate—the ideal of Roman simplicity and a model to his countrymen.

The *Institution* of the Cincinnati begins with these words:

It having pleased the Supreme Governor of the Universe, in the disposition of human affairs, to cause the separation of the colonies of North America from domination of Great Britain, and, after a bloody conflict of eight years, to establish them free, independent, and sovereign states, connected, by alliances founded on reciprocal advantage, with some of the greatest princes and powers of the earth;

To perpetuate, therefore, as well the remembrance of this vast event, as the mutual friendships which have been formed under the pressure of common danger, and, in many instances, cemented by the blood of the parties, the officers of the American army do, hereby, in the most solemn manner, associate, constitute, and combine themselves into one society of friends, to endure as long as they shall endure, or any of their eldest male posterity, and, in failure thereof, the collateral branches who may be judged worthy of becoming its supporters and members.

The following extract from the *Institution* clearly shows the objects of the Cincinnati, and is read at every meeting:

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The following principles shall be immutable, and form the basis of the Society of the Cincinnati:—

An incessant attention to preserve inviolate those exalted rights and liberties of human nature for which they have fought and bled, and without which the high rank of a rational being is a curse instead of a blessing.

An unalterable determination to promote and cherish, between the respective states, that union and national honor so essentially necessary to their happiness and the future dignity of the American empire.

To render permanent the cordial affection subsisting among the officers: This spirit will dictate brotherly kindness in all things, and particularly extend to the most substantial acts of beneficence, according to the ability of the society, towards those officers and their families who unfortunately may be under the necessity of receiving it.

The Society of the Cincinnati thus came into being without reference to political questions, four years before the meeting of the Convention to frame the Constitution of the United States, and before political parties existed. At the meeting on May 13th it was unanimously resolved to ask General Washington to become the President General and a committee consisting of Generals Heath, Steuben and Knox, was appointed formally to notify General Washington of his election. The Commander in Chief, who in his own person had so strikingly resembled Cincinnatus of old, immediately accepted the honor.

It was further voted to recognize as members, the officers of the French Navy and Army who had served in America, giving them the right to organize a branch of the Society in France. All officers were required, upon signing its rolls, to contribute one month's pay to maintain the society and aid members in need. To be eligible for membership, one must have served for three years in

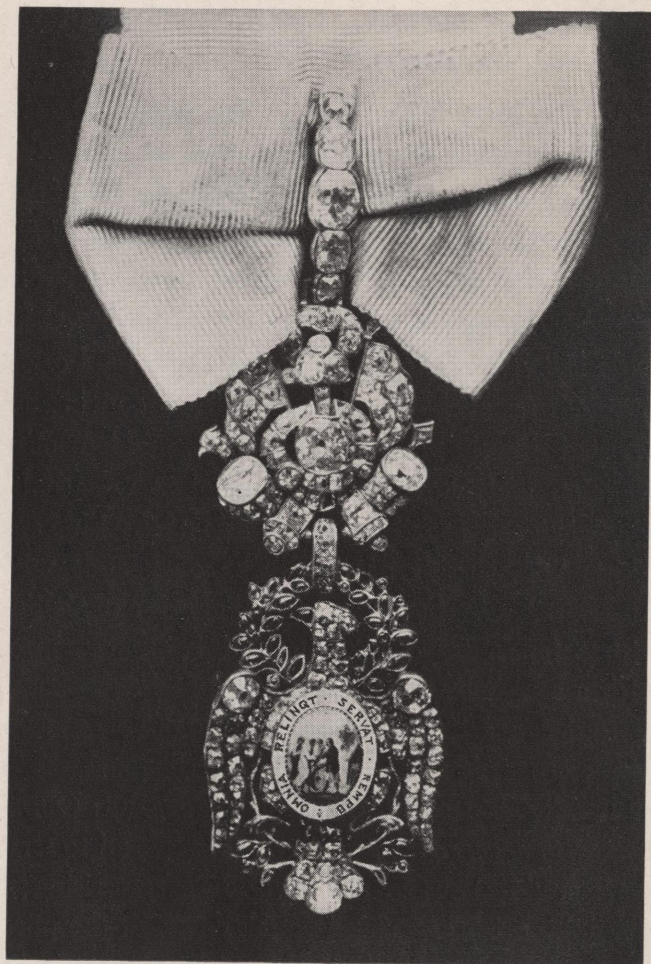
SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

the Continental Army or to have been in service to the end of the war. Later the officers of the Navy were also admitted.

At the May 13th meeting the design for the society's insignia was approved, and on June 19th the meeting charged Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, the distinguished French engineer who later planned the city of Washington near which he sleeps at Arlington, with the duty of having them made in Paris. The badge consists of a bald eagle, "a bird peculiar to the American continent." Grasped in the eagle's talons are golden olive branches and above its head an olive wreath by which it is suspended from a ribbon of sky blue and white, "descriptive of the union of France with America." On the breast of the eagle is a medallion with "the figure of Cincinnatus being presented with a sword by three Senators, and in the background his wife standing at the door of their cottage, near it a plough and other instruments of husbandry." Round the whole the legend: *Omnia Reliquit Servare Rempublicam* (He left all to serve the Republic). On the reverse "a sun rising; a city with open gates, and vessels entering the port; Fame crowning Cincinnatus with a wreath inscribed *Virtutis Præmium*, and below, hands joined, supporting a heart with the motto: *Esto Perpetua*, and round the whole *Societas Cincinnatorum Instituta A. D. 1783.*"

Washington ordered not only one of the Eagles for himself but six others which he presented to his principal military Aides-de-Camp.

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EAGLE OF THE CINCINNATI IN DIAMONDS

(Somewhat enlarged)

Presented to George Washington by officers of the French Navy. It belongs to the Society and has been worn by each of Washington's eleven successors as President General. Probably the most valuable relic of Washington in existence.

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In a letter to the Count de Rochambeau, dated October 29, 1783, Washington wrote:

The officers of the American army, in order to perpetuate that mutual friendship which they contracted in the hour of common danger and distress, and for other purposes which are mentioned in the instrument of their association, have united together in a society of friends under the name of *Cincinnati*; and having honored me with the office of president, it becomes a very agreeable part of my duty to inform you that the Society have done themselves the honor to consider you and the generals and officers of the army which you commanded in America as members of the Society.

Major L'Enfant, who will have the honor to deliver this letter to you, will execute the Order of the Society in France, amongst which he is directed to present you with one of the first Orders that are made, and likewise with Orders for the other gentlemen of your army, which I take the liberty to request you would present to them in the name of the Society. As soon as the diploma is made out, I will have the honor to transmit it to you.

On February 24, 1784, the officers of the French Navy who had been admitted to the Order of the Cincinnati, as it was always known in France, presented General Washington, through His Excellency the Count d'Estaing, the ranking Naval officer, with the Eagle of the Cincinnati richly set in diamonds. The Eagle was sent via the packet ship *Washington*, with the following letter of transmittal:

Paris, 26th February, 1784.

Sir: It is in the name of all the French Navy that I take the liberty to request Your Excellency to accept an American Eagle, expressed rather than embellished by a French artist.

Liberty (of which it is the happy and august symbol) has risen of itself, supported by wisdom, talents and disinterestedness; by every virtue; by General Washington. Obstacles have only served to increase its strength.

The efforts of a patriotic army were irresistible when seconded by the King's troops, who have shown themselves by

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their discipline and conduct worthy of the choice of his Majesty. Those with his navy made everything possible.

It appears then to be proper in one of those who unites the titles of soldier and sailor, and whom you inspire with the sentiments of the most profound admiration and attachment, to entreat you to receive with indulgence an homage which must cease to be unimportant when it shall appeal to your sensibility.

One who has had the happiness to be the first of those whom the King sent to America, and who has been the last of those who were designed to lead thither the forces of two great monarchs, thereby acquiring the happy prerogative of being entitled to express, though faintly, the sentiments of all his fellow sailors and soldiers.

I have the honor to be, with respect, sir,

Your Excellency's most obedient and
Most humble servant,

ESTAING.

Washington wore this Eagle at official gatherings of the Cincinnati and after his death, it was transmitted by his heirs to Major General Alexander Hamilton, his successor as President General, and after Hamilton's untimely death, it was delivered to the third President General, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and since that time has been held by the Society "as appurtenant to the office of President General," and has been worn by each of the other nine men who have occupied that high office. It is not too much to say that this Eagle is the most valuable relic of Washington in existence.

On December 18, 1783, His Most Christian Majesty Louis XVI of France, promulgated a decree authorizing all qualified French officers to accept membership in the Cincinnati under the Institution. The Sovereign consented to be the Patron of the Order in France and all claims were to be finally passed by him in the same manner as for the Royal and Military Order of Saint-Louis.

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Notification of this action was sent to the Count de Rochambeau by the Marquis de Ségur, in a letter dated that same day, in which he added:

His Most Christian Majesty wishes you, on his behalf, to assure His Excellency General Washington that he will always regard with extreme satisfaction everything which may tend to maintain and strengthen the ties formed between France and the United States. The successes which have resulted from this union and the glory which has been the fruit of it have shown its advantages.

The *Gazette de France* of December 23, 1783, officially announced the establishment of the Order and contained a full account of the Institution. On April 15, 1784, the first issue of the *Journal Militaire* gave an account of the Order of the Cincinnati with a list of the French officers admitted to membership with direct approval of the King.

The first meeting of the members of the Cincinnati in France was held at the *hôtel* of the Count de Rochambeau, and on this occasion the authorization of the King was read together with General Washington's letter and a copy of the Institution. A motion was unanimously adopted to contribute, under provisions of the Institution, the sum of sixty thousand livres (\$12,000) to the funds of the General Society. Washington, with characteristic delicacy declined this gift, at the same time expressing his deep appreciation.

On May 17, 1784, four days after the general meeting of the Cincinnati, in Philadelphia, Washington wrote to Lafayette as follows:

Philadelphia, 17th May, 1784.

Sir:

The Society of the Cincinnati in a General Meeting of delegates from the respective States, now held in this City, have

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had before them the letters which were addressed by you to the President General.

The measures you have taken to fulfill the intentions of the Society are proofs of your attachment and obligations on the Society.

The permission of His Most Christian Majesty for his Generals and Colonels and also for the Admirals to wear the Order of the Cincinnati, is a real distinction to the Society, and is considered as an obliging instance of His Majesty's condescension.

You will see, Sir, by the papers which will be sent to the Society in France, that the Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati has necessarily undergone some alterations and amendments, and you will see also, in the Circular letter, the reasons for such alterations being made.

By the Institution as it is now recommended for concurrence and confirmation to all the State Meetings and to the Meeting in France, it is provided that all the Generals and Colonels of Regiments and Legions in the Land Forces, and all the Admirals and Captains of the Navy, ranking as Colonels, who cooperated with the Armies of the United States, etc., are admitted to the Society, and it was so expressed as well to comprehend all the gentlemen mentioned in the Memorial of Count d'Estaing as several others, Commanders and Captains of Squadrons and Frigates, who had done essential service under the orders of His Excellency, the Chevalier de la Luzerne; and also Mr. De Tarlé and Colonel Lameth, who were heretofore supposed not eligible to become members. . . .

The Meeting of the Society in France, being now distinctly considered in all respects of the same authority as the State Meetings, no claims will in future be determined in the General Meeting, and all claimants must apply to the meeting of the State or Country where they reside.

Those meetings alone are to judge of the qualifications of members of this Society.

It is a subject of concern to this meeting that so good an officer as Admiral de Vaudreuil should have been omitted by mistake, but as he is now included in the Society, an error which we lament should not induce him to decline the Association.

You have the thanks of this meeting for your attention to the Honor of the Society.

Signed in General Meeting: By Order

GEORGE WASHINGTON
President General

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The Cincinnati's records contain copies of many of Washington's letters to the Society in France respecting the claims of French officers to membership.

The French Revolution caused the dispersion of the members of the Cincinnati in France, though as late as February 1792, after all titles of nobility and Orders had been suppressed, so great was the desire for membership that the Minister of War presented a list of applicants to the King, which was personally endorsed by him as "approved" on February 3, 1792, and was his last official act in connection with the Order of the Cincinnati. A great many of the French members perished on the guillotine during the Reign of Terror, and, though numerous individual hereditary members were admitted from time to time, the Order of the Cincinnati in France was not officially revived until 1923. It has today a membership of more than 175.

Opposition to the Cincinnati was not confined to Revolutionary France. No sooner had the society been established than it became the object of fierce attacks from many quarters, chiefly on account of the hereditary feature of the Institution. It had been provided that upon the death of a member, his membership should pass to his eldest son, and so on following the law of primogeniture. Objection in America was to be found chiefly among those who had not rendered military service in the war and were therefore not eligible for membership.

To Samuel Adams' watchful and suspicious mind, the association was "a plan disgusting to the

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American feeling." John Adams considered it "the first step taken to deface the beauty of our Temple of Liberty," "the deepest piece of cunning yet attempted; it is sowing the seeds of all that European Courts wish to grow up among us, viz. of vanity, ambition, corruption, discord and sedition," though he later spoke of the Cincinnati as "enjoying the sweetest of rewards in the grateful affection of their fellow-citizens," and when the Cincinnati "pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honors, I believe no man will doubt their integrity." Doctor Franklin indulged in some ridicule of the Institution and condemned the members as "forming an order of Hereditary Knights," but he subsequently accepted honorary membership in the Society. John Jay thought that the "Order will eventually divide us into two mighty factions."

Thomas Jefferson, the most influential of the Society's opponents, felt that it was contrary to the "letter of some of our Constitutions and to the spirit of all of them," and in opposition to "the natural equality of man." He declared himself to be "an enemy to the Institution from the first moment of its conception," considered "their meetings objectionable," and "the charitable part of the Institution still more likely to do mischief," and advised the members to "distribute their funds, renounce their existence," and "melt up their eagles."

The Massachusetts Legislature declared the Cincinnati "dangerous to the peace, liberty and safety of the United States," while Rhode Island threat-

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ened such of her citizens with disfranchisement as were members of the Society.

Judge Ædanus Burke of South Carolina was one of the most violent critics. He saw visions of a "race of hereditary patricians and nobility," and his pamphlet was the basis of Mirabeau's *Considérations sur l'Ordre de Cincinnatus* (1784), perhaps the most violent of the writings against the Order. Of this publication Washington wrote to Samuel Vaughan on November 30, 1785:

... With those who are disposed to cavil, or who have the itch of writing strongly upon them [the objections to the Cincinnati], nothing can be made to suit their palates. The best way, therefore, to disconcert and defeat them, is to take no notice of their publications. All else is but food for declamation. There is not, I conceive, an unbiassed mind, that would refuse the officers of the late army the right of associating for the purpose of establishing a fund for the support of the poor and distressed of their fraternity, when many of them, it is well known, are reduced to their last shifts by the ungenerous conduct of their country in not adopting more vigorous measures to render their certificates productive. That charity is all that remains of the original institution, none, who will be at the trouble of reading it, can deny.

In a letter to Jefferson of April 8, 1784, he had referred to the alarm produced, especially in the Eastern states, by Burke's tract. The former letter was written after the general meeting of 1784, at which it was thought best to alter the Institution by the elimination of the hereditary principle.

Washington had written to Knox from Mount Vernon on February 20, 1784:

... It was amongst my first acts after I got home to write to the president of each State society, appointing Philadelphia (and the first Monday in May) for the General Meeting of the Cincinnati. . . . It would give me pleasure to have the first General Meeting a very full one. I have named Philadelphia (contrary to my own judgment, as it is not central)

SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI MEDAL OF 1783 AND COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS BEARING THE PORTRAIT OF GEORGE WASHINGTON



Plaque commemorating the Triennial Meeting of the General Society of the Cincinnati in Philadelphia, 1932, and the Bicentennial of the birth of George Washington, first President General of the Society



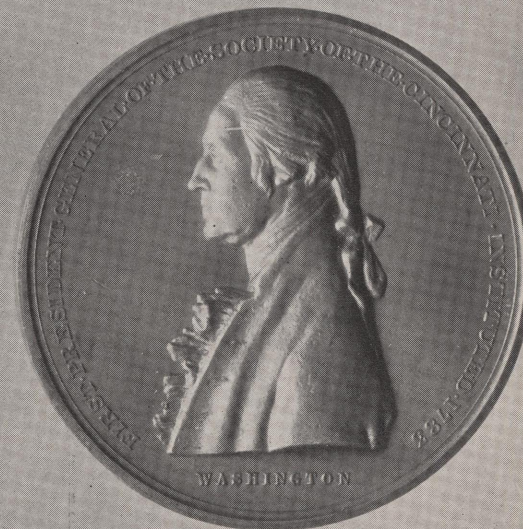
Medal commemorating the Sesquicentennial, 1931, of the Victory at Yorktown. The reverse depicts the surrender of Cornwallis. The vignettes are of Washington, de Grasse, Rochambeau and Lafayette



Medal commemorating the Triennial Meeting of the General Society of the Cincinnati held in Boston, Massachusetts, 1929



Cincinnati Medal designed by Major L'Enfant, 1783. Struck in 1914 to commemorate the Triennial Meeting of the General Society of the Cincinnati in Baltimore, Maryland



Medal commemorating the Triennial Meeting of the General Society of the Cincinnati in Wilmington, Delaware, 1923

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to comply with the wishes of South Carolina, who being the most southern State have desired it. North Carolina I have not heard a tittle from, nor anything official from New Hampshire. All the other States have acceded very unanimously to the propositions which were sent from the army.

It was, [says Marshal], impossible for Washington to view with indifference the state of public feeling. Bound to the officers of his army by the strictest ties of esteem and affection, conscious of their merits and assured of their attachment to his person, he was alive to every thing which might affect their reputation or their interests. However innocent the institution might be in itself, or however laudable its real objects, if the impression it made on the public mind was such as to draw a line of distinction between the military men of America and their fellow-citizens, he was earnest in his wishes to adopt such measures as would efface that impression. However ill-founded the public prejudices might be, he thought this a case in which they ought to be respected; and if it should be found impossible to convince the people that their fears were misplaced, he was disposed to yield to them in a degree, and not to suffer that which was intended for the best of purposes to produce a bad one.

Accordingly in a circular letter to the several state societies, dated May 15, 1784, Washington said:

Notwithstanding we are thus conscious for ourselves of the rectitude of our intentions in instituting and becoming members of this Fraternity; and notwithstanding we are confident the highest evidence can be produced from your past, and will be given by your future behavior, that you could not have been influenced by any other motives than those of friendship, patriotism, and benevolence; yet, as our designs in some respects have been misapprehended, . . . ; as the original institution appeared, in the opinion of many respectable characters, to have comprehended objects incompatible with the genius and spirit of the confederation; and as in this case it would eventually frustrate our purposes and be productive of consequences which we had not foreseen. Therefore, to remove every cause of inquietude, to annihilate every source of jealousy, to designate explicitly the ground on which we wish to stand, and give one more proof that the late officers of the American Army have a claim to be reckoned among the most faithful citizens, we have agreed that the following material alterations and amendments should take place: . . .

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He then sets forth the abolition of the hereditary succession and goes into further detail as to the unfortunate misunderstanding of the pure motives which inspired him and his officers in instituting the Cincinnati.

The alteration in the Institution required ratification by the state societies, and as this was not given, it remains as originally written, so that the Society has come down to us unchanged, hereditary succession and all.

On December 11, 1785, Washington wrote to Hamilton regretting that the changes in the Institution had not been adopted, saying that he felt that such were necessary "if the Society of the Cincinnati mean to live in peace with the rest of their fellow citizens."

At the meeting of May, 1787, a letter was read from President General Washington, giving the causes which might probably prevent his attending. The reasons were that he had "of late been so much afflicted with a rheumatic complaint in my shoulder that at times I am hardly able to raise my hand to my head, or turn myself in bed," and moreover that he desired to take no further part in public affairs, because "my own private concerns, which having been much deranged by my absence through the war, demand my entire and unremitting attention," and of "the natural desire of tranquility . . . at my time of life," etc.

On March 28, 1787, he wrote to Governor Randolph of Virginia giving the same reasons for declining to attend the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, but adding that if he were able to go

he would wish "to account personally for my conduct to the general meeting of the Cincinnati," because "my feelings would be much hurt, if that anybody should otherwise ascribe my attending the one and not the other occasion to a disrespectful inattention to the Society, when the fact is, that I shall ever retain the most lively and affectionate regard for the members of which it is composed, on account of their attachment to me and uniform support upon many trying occasions, as well as on account of their public virtues, patriotism, and sufferings."

He also wrote to General Knox on March 8, 1787:

"I am indirectly and delicately pressed to attend the Convention [to frame the Constitution of the United States]. Several reasons are opposed to it in my mind; and not the least, having declined attending the General Meeting of the Cincinnati, which is to be held in Philadelphia at the same time, on account of the disrespect it might seem to offer to that Society were I to attend on another occasion." In a letter of April 2, 1787, to Knox, he again expressed his feelings: "If I should attend the convention, I will be in Philadelphia previous to the meeting of the Cincinnati, where I shall hope and expect to meet you and some other of my particular friends the day before, in order that I may have a free and unreserved conference with you on the subject of it. . . ." He continues with the thought that though the State Societies had rejected the amended Institution, possibly "the subsiding of the jealousies respecting it," are "to be

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ascribed to the modifications which took place at the last general meeting." On the 27th of the same month he wrote Knox again, stating that he had "determined to shew my respect to the General Meeting of the Society by coming there the week before," thus departing "from the resolution I had taken of never more stepping out of the walks of private life." Washington did, in fact, attend the general meeting of 1787, but took no part in the proceedings.

Under date of November 14, 1786, Jefferson had written from Paris to Washington, concerning the Cincinnati, that:

. . . even as now reformed, as the germ whose development is one day to destroy the fabric we have reared . . . , though the day may be at some distance, beyond the reach of our lives, perhaps, yet it will certainly come, when a single fibre left of this institution will produce an hereditary aristocracy, which will change the form of our governments from the best to the worst in the world. . . . With us, the branches of this institution cover all the States. The Southern ones, at this time, are aristocratical in their dispositions; and that the spirit should grow and extend itself, is within the natural order of things. . . . When the society themselves shall weigh the possibility of evil, against the impossibility of any good to proceed from this institution, I cannot help hoping that they will eradicate it.

He also inclosed a copy of the entry on the subject of the Cincinnati, from the *Encyclopédie Méthodique*, which he said was "a tissue of errors."

Washington desired to place these objections before the Society, but, in forwarding Jefferson's letter to Knox, said in his letter of April 27, 1787:

In my present state of mind I can hardly form an opinion whether it will be best to lay the matter before the society as coming from Mr. Jefferson, or as from a person of as good information as any in France. I must therefore leave it wholly to you to do as you may think most proper.

On May 30th, after the general meeting of the Cincinnati, Washington answered Jefferson's letter, commenting on the article in the *Encyclopédie*: "Nothing can be more ridiculous than the supposition of the author, that the Society was instituted partly because the country could not then pay the army." He further explained that though he had intended to take no further part in public business, he had been pressed into attending the national convention in Philadelphia as the representative of his native state, and had therefore to accept also the reelection to the office of President General of the Cincinnati to avoid "an extremely disagreeable situation with relation to that brave and faithful class of men, whose persevering patriotism and friendship I had experienced on so many trying occasions."

The Cincinnati was divided into fourteen branches, one in each of the original thirteen states and one in France. Some of the state Societies ceased to exist, for a time, owing to the members having become scattered, and partly also on account of the opposition of those in power, but all have been restored and flourish today. Triennial general meetings have been held without interruption.

Among the great leaders of our Revolution who were members of the Cincinnati, there may be mentioned, besides Washington himself, Hamilton, Lafayette, Knox, Greene, Steuben, Benjamin Lincoln, Pinckney, John Paul Jones, McDougall, Putnam, Schuyler, Gates, President Monroe, Moultrie, Kosciuszko, Anthony Wayne, Sullivan, Muhlen-

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berg, Weedon, "Light Horse Harry" Lee, and St. Clair.* President Pierce was an hereditary member.

The French members included, as Baron de Contenson says, "the very elite of the French nobility," and a few words as to them may not be amiss. Among them were: Marshal of France the Count de Rochambeau, Commander of the French Auxilliary Army in America; Admiral the Count de Grasse, Naval Commander without whom there could have been no victory at Yorktown; Lieutenant General the Count d'Estaing, Commander of the French Coöperating Army in America, first President of the French Cincinnati, who perished on the guillotine; General the Count d'Aboville, commandant of artillery in the French Expeditionary Force, who died in the Restoration; Count d'Autichamp, father of one of the principal chiefs of the Vendée; Vice-Admiral Count de Bougainville, the celebrated navigator; Prince Victor de Broglie, Deputy of Alsace to the States General, who perished on the guillotine; the Duke de Castres, son of the Minister of Marine; Berthier, the future Prince de Wagram and one of Napoleon's generals; the Marquis de Chastellux, one of the celebrated philosophers of the eighteenth century and one of the "Immortals" of the French Academy; the Marquis du Châtelet who during the French Revolution poisoned himself in prison as did also his friend Condorcet; the Count de Cus-

* Major General Arthur St. Clair, President of the Society of the Cincinnati in Pennsylvania, was Governor of the Northwest Territory, in which a great number of the members of the Cincinnati took up lands granted them for Revolutionary service. General St. Clair changed the name of the chief town, Losantiville, to Cincinnati, in honor of the Society. This is the origin of the name of the city of Cincinnati, Ohio.

tine, General in Chief during the French Revolution, who perished on the guillotine; the Duke de Damas; five members of the great Irish family of Dillon; General Aubert du Bayet, later Ambassador; the Count de Fersen of Sweden, who made such heroic efforts to rescue Marie Antoinette; the navigator Fleuriot de Langle; the Duke de Lauzun, later the Duke de Biron, General in Chief of the Armies of the Republic; the three brothers de Lameth; Colonel the Viscount de Mirabeau, brother of the arch enemy of the Cincinnati; Admiral the Count de Kersaint, Deputy to the Convention, who perished on the guillotine; the Duke de Montmorency, the future Academician and Minister of Foreign Affairs under the Restoration; the Marquis de la Tour du Pin, Prefect of the Empire; Captain the Viscount des Cars who was killed at the battle of Les Saintes; the Marquis de MacMahon; Lieutenant-General the Baron de Montesquieu, grandson of one of France's greatest thinkers; the great La Motte-Picquet; the Viscount de Noailles, brother-in-law of Lafayette and Deputy to the Assembly and later hero of a famous naval engagement; the Count de Ségur, later Ambassador and Grand Master of Ceremonies of Napoleon; the Bailli de Suffren, one of the greatest sailors of the eighteenth century; the Marquis and the Count de Saint-Simon; Colonel the Marquis de Pange, who fell in the Vendée; General the Count de Talleyrand-Périgord; Lieutenant General the Marquis de Bouillé, Governor of the Antilles; the Count de Vioménil, Marshal of France under the Restoration, and many more. One of the first

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hereditary members admitted was the son of Major General the Baron de Kalb who had been mortally wounded at the battle of Camden in 1780.

The Institution provided for the admission of a limited number of honorary members, men whose services and ideals were similar to those of the Cincinnati. Under this provision some of the most noted men of this and other countries have been elected to honorary membership, including: Franklin, Gouverneur Morris, Paca, Perry, Bainbridge, Winfield Scott, Decatur, Zachary Taylor*, Webster, Grant, Sherman, Farragut, Cleveland, Dewey, Jusserand, Schofield, Benjamin Harrison, McKinley, President Loubet of France, Chaffee, Theodore Roosevelt, Taft, Woodrow Wilson, His Majesty Albert King of the Belgians, Foch, Joffre, Pétain, Newton Baker, Leonard Wood, Pershing, and March. The most recent addition to this illustrious roll is the name of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the fifteenth President of the United States to wear the Eagle.

The diplomas of membership, also designed by L'Enfant, drawn by the famous French master, Auguste L. Belle, and executed by J. J. Le Veau, were in every instance signed by Washington as President General and by Knox as Secretary General. Some of these certificates, signed by Washington at Mount Vernon, are among the last documents to which he affixed his signature. One of the interesting features of the Triennial Meeting of

* Had not the Virginia Society of the Cincinnati been dormant, General Zachary Taylor would probably have been an hereditary instead of an honorary member, as he was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Taylor, of the Second Virginia Regiment, Continental Line, an original member of the Cincinnati.

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the Cincinnati held in Boston in June, 1929, the first for over a hundred years at which French delegates were present, was the delivery to the President of the French Society, the Duke de Broglie, descendant and representative of the Prince de Broglie of Yorktown fame, of 33 diplomas of the Cincinnati, bearing Washington's autograph, and made out for original members of the French Society. The diplomas had lain among the Cincinnati's papers awaiting delivery, all those years. The Society for safe keeping, has now placed its extensive archives in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress.

Washington at all times took the greatest interest in the activities of the Society of the Cincinnati, and guided them with his council. Though he did not attend the four other general meetings (1790, 1793, 1796 and 1799), held before his death, he received and signed official Cincinnati documents as long as he lived. In a letter to Knox of October 16, 1783, he speaks of a gift to the Society of five hundred dollars. His personal gift to Liberty Hall Academy in Rockbridge County, Virginia, so inspired the Virginia branch of the Order that they voted in 1807 to present their entire fund, consisting of some \$25,000, derived from the contribution of a month's pay by each member, to this institution, which by that time had become known as Washington College—now Washington and Lee University.

On October 27, 1789, Washington, then in Boston, attended a special meeting of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati. In his address the presiding officer referred to their affection for the

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President General and their memory of hardships endured in the late war. Washington replied as follows:

Members of the Society of the Cincinnati in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Gentlemen: In reciprocating with gratitude and sincerity the multiplied and affecting gratulations of my fellow-citizens of this Commonwealth, they will all of them with justice allow me to say that none can be dearer to me than the affectionate assurances which you have expressed. Dear indeed is the occasion which restores an intercourse with my faithful associates in prosperous and adverse fortunes! and enhanced are the triumphs of peace participated with those whose virtue and valor so largely contributed to procure them. To that virtue and valor your country has confessed her obligations! Be mine the grateful task to add the testimony of conviction which it was my pride to own in the field, and it is now my happiness to acknowledge in the enjoyments of peace and freedom.

Regulating your conduct by those principles which have heretofore governed your actions as men, soldiers and citizens, you will repeat the obligations conferred on your country, and you will transmit to posterity an example which must command their admiration and obtain their grateful praise.

Long may you continue to enjoy the endearments of fraternal attachment, and the heartfelt happiness of reflecting that you have faithfully done your duty!

While I am permitted to possess the consciousness of that worth which has long bound me to you by every tie of affection and esteem, I will continue to be your sincere and faithful friend.

Washington not being present at the 1790 Triennial General Meeting of the Cincinnati in Philadelphia, resolutions were adopted respecting his "being unanimously elected the head of our rising republic," and "felicitating our countrymen on this happy event," adding that "we love and revere you as a father . . . we applaud the wisdom of our countrymen in placing you at the head of it, we pledge ourselves to support its administration with the remnants of our lives long since devoted to the public service." A committee of nine members of which General Knox was the chairman, was

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appointed to "present the foregoing address to the President of the United States."

To these resolutions General Washington replied:

To the Delegates of the State Societies of the Cincinnati lately assembled at their Triennial Meeting:— Gentlemen:— Although it is easier for you to conceive than for me to explain the pleasing sensations which have been excited in my breast by your congratulations on my appointment to the head of this rising republic, yet I must take the liberty to thank you sincerely for the polite manner in which you felicitate our countrymen, and testify your regard to me on this occasion.

In addition to that reward for your sufferings and services which arises from the consciousness of having done your duty, you have erected monuments more expressive of your merits than even the universal applause of your country in the establishment of its independence and sovereignty; nor should any possible circumstances of poverty or adversity compel you to give up that sweet satisfaction for the part you have acted, which ought to attend you as well through the vicissitudes of life as in the moment of dissolution.

The candor of your fellow-citizens acknowledges the patriotism of your conduct in peace, as their gratitude has declared their obligations for your fortitude and perseverance in war. A knowledge that they now do justice to the purity of your intentions ought to be your highest consolation, as the fact is demonstrative of your greatest glory.

The object for which your gallantry encountered every danger, and your virtue sustained unparalleled difficulties, has happily been attained. A government, promising protection and prosperity to the people of the United States, is established, and its operations hitherto have been such as to justify the most sanguine expectations of further success. It was naturally to be expected that lives which had long since been devoted on the altar of freedom could never be offered at the shrine of anarchy and despotism. And the offer which you make of the residue of those lives to support the administration of this government is not less a proof of its excellence than an encouragement for those concerned in its execution to use their best endeavors to make it a source of extensive and permanent blessings to their country.

Whatever titles my military services may have given me to the regard of my country, they are principally corroborated by the firm support of my brave and faithful associates in the field; and if any consideration is to be attributed to the successful exercise of my civil duties, it proceeds, in a great

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measure, from the wisdom of the laws and the facility which the disposition of my fellow-citizens has given to their administration.

To the most affectionate wishes for your temporal happiness, I add a fervent prayer for your eternal felicity,

G. WASHINGTON.

When the news of Washington's death was received by the state societies, the members voted to wear mourning. For example, at a special meeting of the Massachusetts Society on January 15, 1800, it was ordered "that the members of the Society continue to wear a black crape cockade in the hat till the 5th of July next, as a badge of mourning for their deceased President-general, George Washington." The Cincinnati of Washington's native Virginia resolved: "That this meeting will wear a black crape on the left arm for three months, and that they cannot suppress their expectations that the same mark of Sorrow and respect will be shown by every other member of the Society in Virginia. Many members of the Order wore crape on their Eagles, one of which, with the crape still attached, is now in the collection of the American Numismatic Society in New York.

The first act of the adjourned General Meeting on May 5, 1800, was the adoption of a "testimonial of respect" to the memory of General Washington, and a "mournful tribute of their sorrow, at that awful dispensation of Providence, which has recently removed from their councils, their much revered and lamented president-general."

On July 4, 1810, the Pennsylvania Cincinnati resolved to invite subscriptions for the erection of "a permanent memorial of their respect to the late Father of his Country, General George Washington." By careful management the amount of the

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fund by 1877, warranted the undertaking. In competition with others, the designs of Prof. Rudolph Siemering of Berlin were accepted. On May 15, 1897, this monument, in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, was unveiled by William McKinley, President of the United States, an honorary member of the Cincinnati. The monument is an equestrian bronze statue of Washington, 44 feet in height, and on a granite platform 61 by 74 feet. At the four corners of the base are allegorical fountains representing the Delaware, Hudson, Potomac and Mississippi Rivers. On the front of the pedestal is a bas relief figure of America receiving the trophies of victory from her sons. On the back is America arousing her sons to a sense of their slavery. Bas reliefs on the sides represent the March of the American Army, and the Westward Movement of the American People. The legend on the pedestal is: *Erected by the State Society of the Cincinnati of Pennsylvania*. The names of 41 military and civil leaders of the Revolution are cut into the bronze of the pedestal designs.

There were about two thousand original members of the Cincinnati, there being today about thirteen hundred. The Society has been the model of a large number of what are known as "patriotic societies." It has never taken any part in political matters, and such, like religious discussions, are barred from all its meetings. The members accept the solemn duty imposed upon them by the honorable traditions of the Cincinnati, chief among which is of course, an attempt to follow in the footsteps of "the Cincinnatus of the West," George Washington himself. *Esto perpetua*.

*Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—
The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeath'd the name of Washington,
To make men blush there was but one!*

—(From Lord Byron's *Ode to Napoleon*)

Be it known that Ferdinand Joseph Siegfried de Wrochem Esquire
 is a Member of the Society of the CINCINNATI, instituted by the Officers of the American Army, at the Period of its Disposition, as well
 to commemorate the Great Event which gave Independence to NORTH AMERICA, as for the laudable Purpose of insulating the Duty
 of paying down in Peace, Arms obtained for public Defence, and of uniting in Acts of brotherly Affection and Bonds of perpetual Friendship
 the Members constituting the same.

IN TESTIMONY whereof, The President of the said Society have hereunto set my hand at Mount Vernon
 in the State of Virginia, this Thirty-first Day of October, in the
 Year of our Lord One thousand, seven hundred and eighty-five, and in the tenth
 Year of the Independence of the United States.

By order

Wm. Henry

Genl. Washington President

DIPLOMA OF THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

Designed by Major L'Enfant, who planned the City of Washington. Original diplomas were signed by George Washington as President General and Henry Knox as Secretary General.

NOTE: Several diplomas show an Eagle in the upper right and left corners. These Eagles were penned in after the diplomas were signed by George Washington. They do not appear in the original design of L'Enfant.

From the collection of Hon. Sol Bloom.

PRESIDENT GENERALS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI

Since its Institution

- 1783. General George Washington of Virginia.
- 1800. Major-General Alexander Hamilton of New York.
- 1805. Major-General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina.
- 1825. Major-General Thomas Pinckney of South Carolina.
- 1829. Major-General Aaron Ogden of New Jersey.
- 1839. Major-General Morgan Lewis of New York.
- 1844. Major William Popham of New York.
- 1848. Brigadier-General Henry Alexander Scammell Dearborn of Massachusetts.
- 1854. Hon. Hamilton Fish of New York.
- 1896. Hon. William Wayne of Pennsylvania.
- 1902. Hon. Winslow Warren of Massachusetts.
- 1932. Hon. John Collins Daves of North Carolina.

Officers of the General Society of the Cincinnati, 1932

- President General.....John Collins Daves of North Carolina.
- Vice-President General.....Bryce Metcalf of Connecticut.
- Secretary General.....Francis Apthorp Foster of Georgia.
- Assistant Secretary General...Edgar Erskine Hume of Virginia.
- Treasurer General.....Henry Randall Webb of Maryland (Died 1933).
- Assistant Treasurer General...Horace Morison of New Hampshire.

Presidents of the State Societies of the Cincinnati, 1932

- New Hampshire.....Mr. Lynde Sullivan, Durham, N. H.
- MassachusettsMr. Charles Allerton Coolidge, Boston, Mass.
- Rhode Island.....The Most. Rev. James DeWolf Perry, Jr., Providence, R. I.
- ConnecticutLt. Col. Bryce Metcalf, U.S.A. Reserve, Ardsley, N. Y.
- New York.....Dr. William Sturgis Thomas, New York City.
- New Jersey.....Dr. William Holland Wilmer, Baltimore, Md.
- PennsylvaniaMr. William Wayne (Died 1933), Paoli, Penna.
- DelawareMr. Edwin Jaquett Sellers, Philadelphia, Penna.
- MarylandMr. Henry Randall Webb (Died 1933), Washington, D. C.
- VirginiaMajor Edgar Erskine Hume, U.S.A., Frankfort, Ky.
- North Carolina.....Mr. John Collins Daves, Baltimore, Md.
- South Carolina.....Mr. Lawrence Monck Pinckney, Charleston, S. C.
- GeorgiaMr. George Noble Jones, Savannah, Ga.
- FranceMaurice, Duke de Broglie, Paris, France.



WASHINGTON MONUMENT, FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA
Erected by the Pennsylvania Society of the Cincinnati. Unveiled, 1897, by
William McKinley, President of the United States, a member of
the Pennsylvania Society.